



## Van Buren Conservation District

### August 2022 Program Update

Submitted by Emily Hickmott, Deputy Administrator

The Van Buren Conservation District's (VBCD) annual meeting and director election was a successful one, with about 145 people turning out to celebrate conservation in Van Buren County over the past year. The Wolf Lake State Fish Hatchery was an excellent host, and we were grateful to our local and State representatives for attending and to Senator Aric Nesbitt for presenting State of Michigan tributes to our Conservationists and Farmer of the Year. The VBCD calendar is still full in August and September with field days, paddles with a naturalist, and recycling collections. You can always see our upcoming events here: <https://vanburencd.org/my-calendar/>.

#### Program Updates:

- **Administrator** (*Kim Sinclair*) - On July 27th we had a wonderful Annual Meeting at Wolf Lake Fish Hatchery. Bill VanTassel was re-elected to serve on our board. The day was lovely and we had a large turnout. The first week of August we had our Healthy Water Week. All week long we provided nitrate and nitrite screenings for free. We also gave out 1,000 reusable water bottles at the Back to School Bonanza sponsored by the ISD. The second recycle roundup was held in South Haven and was very successful. Our MAEAP Fruit Field Day was absolutely picturesque. Farmers learned both the good and the bad about cover crop installations. The Deputy Administrator and I met with Representative Wendzel via zoom. We updated her on our district, projects and events. I attended
- the Covert Township Board Meeting to promote the Army Corps of Engineers Beach Walk in South Haven and provide support for critical dune information. The Beach Walk was well attended and very informative. We're wrapping up the paddles and hikes as summer dwindles down. Last chance for recycling events as well!
- **Ag Conservation/Water Quality Projects** (*Erin Fuller, Colleen Forestieri, Hannah Hudson, Carlie Southland*) - The Van Buren Conservation District is partnering with the University of Notre Dame on a grant-funded project to collect water samples to help determine if on-the-ground conservation practices are improving water quality. This project will continue for at least three years. Conservation Technician Colleen Forestieri continued recruiting farmers to participate in cost-share programs to install conservation practices on their fields.
- **SWxSW Corner CISMA (Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area)** (*Abbie Bristol, Alex Florian, Justin Palthe, Lance McCarty*) - July was a busy month with landing blitzes, hikes, site visits, and management of high-priority invasive species. While installing spotted lanternfly traps throughout the CISMA, we discovered a patch of flowering rush growing along the St. Joseph River. A report of European frogbit was investigated and was not found. CISMA staff is also now CPR/First Aid certified.
- **Education & Water Quality** (*Carlie Southland*) - Conservation Associate, Carlie Southland, continued and finished up her summer education programs with Van Buren District Library, South Haven Memorial Library, and Lawton Schools. She has participated in Pop Up Lit Labs in partnership with Bangor Schools and the Van Buren District Library. She is continuing to water sample at a local farm.





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- **Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program (MAEAP)** (*Kyle Mead*) - Kyle had a month of meetings, visiting the fair but mostly putting the final touches on the August 10 MAEAP Fruit Field Day.
- **National Association of Conservation Districts Technical Assistance** (*Lucas Hartman*) - EQIP contracts for fiscal year 2022 have been signed and initiated.
  - \$176,744.00 in total obligation for selected contracts
  - 843 total Acres committed to EQIP program
    - 290 Acres committed to Forestry and habitat conservation
    - 553 Acres committed to agricultural conservation
- **Outreach** (*Jacob Diljak*) - July saw great public outreach with attendance to three farmers markets, billboards, and the Van Buren County Youth Fair Kids' Tent. Future events are in the works for next month.
- **Resource Recovery Recycling** (*Kalli Marshall*) - July was another successful month for recycling. We held the large tire event totaling 2,578 passenger tire equivalents (PTEs) collected in Paw Paw, MI at Van Buren County Buildings and Grounds. The following week we collected 1,300 PTEs and approximately 1,000 pounds of electronics at the City of Hartford Passenger and Semi tire collection event. Kalli also stayed in contact with EGLE regarding the electronics grant and holding a regional grant.